

SISTERS' DEPARTMENT.

Our Responsibilities and Conduct.

An essay read at Children's church held in the Brethren meeting house at Maitland, by Mollie Stinebarger.

For a long time there have been some thoughts and questions impressing themselves upon my mind both in regard to professing Christians and others who make no profession. We look around us in our own neighborhood and we see aged men and women, middle aged men and women, we see young men and women, all of whom ought to be in the church and working for the Master, but are still wondering in the paths of sin, apparently indifferent in regard to their salvation. There are young people enjoying the happy days of youth, unfettered by care, unburdened by sorrow, full of energy, life and activity, who ought to be working out their own salvation and trying to win others to Christ; but who are wasting the liveliest, happiest and best part of their lives in sin. Here are older people whose hearts are full of care, whose hair is whitening, whose cheeks and brows are becoming furrowed with the sorrow of life and who seem to be taking no thought for the eternal morrow beyond the grave. As we look upon them with sorrow in our hearts and concern for their welfare, we cannot but ask ourselves the question: why is it? Surely it cannot be God's fault, who delighteth not in the death of any but would have all men come to Him that they may have life. It is not the fault of Christ, who lay down his life that a sin-cursed world through him might be saved. It cannot be that God's Spirit has ceased to strive with our people here. Yet God has said, 'my Spirit shall not always strive with men.'

We have frequently had evidence of the Spirit striving in our midst. We think it cannot be that they have not had sufficient invitation. The spirit and the bride say come. Here from this pulpit, as well as others, have been extended invitation after invitation but how few have been accepting them. The more we reflect upon this subject the more the question impresses itself upon my mind, and with it comes another thought. Is it our fault? Is it the fault of church members? When I look with whom I so frequently associate, those who come within reach of my influence, who attend church with me, and when I see how apparently indifferent they seem in regard to their soul's welfare, the questions forces themselves upon my mind: has not my influence been what it ought to be? Am I keeping others out of Christ,

and the church by my missteps and failures? Have I placed my candle under a bushel or am I lighting it to give out a false light? Or is my walk, conduct and conversation so at variance with my profession, that sinners are lead to believe that there is no reality in the religion of Jesus Christ?

My brother, my sister, the world is watching us and taking note of our doings, our inconsistencies, our failure, all are noted down. How often do we hear the expression, 'he's a pretty Christian, he's a nice church member.' If we allow some trivial excuse to keep us from church, or worse still if we stay away without any excuse, we are setting a bad example, one that others are apt to follow, and one that leads the world to think we are not much interested in the cause we are engaged in. The natural tendency will be to make sinners more careless, more thoughtless when they see our indifference in these matters. If, when there is an opportunity for us to attend the service of the sanctuary, we prefer loafing at the stores or making friendly gossip calls upon our neighbors, or taking our ease at the family fireside with our hands folded, the world will be expected to measure our interest in Christ's cause and our own spiritual growth. Not only does the world take note of our doings, but I am persuaded that the world measures us largely by our conversation. We profess to love God and His word and to follow His teaching. It may be we find more pleasure in the novel or the secular newspaper than in the magical sweetness of the words that fell from the lips of the blessed Saviour. If we find a keener engagement in talking about political issues of the day, our farms, our business, the latest style of dress, than in talking about the love of Christ to a dying world, how quickly will the world be able to guess where our treasures are. Let us not be misunderstood in this. It is not particularly wrong to understand the political issues of the day, nor is it wrong to be interested in our business, our farms, our stores, our schools, etc. The apostle said be not slothful in business, but if we let these things be upper most in our minds so that our salvation, our concern for the welfare of others, and the love of God to us becomes a secondary matter, then we are at fault. Our Saviour has said we should love one another. By this shall all men know ye are my disciples if ye have love one toward another. This will show to the world we are our heavenly Father's children. On the other hand how shall sinners be led to accept Christ,

and in our ranks when our lives are so little in accordance with our profession? Let us not forget that God will hold us accountable for the example we set others, and the influence we shed around us. Let us not forget when we stand at the bar of God, He may ask us the same question He did Cain away back in the beginning of the world. Where is thy brother? O my brother, oh my sister, what will be our humiliation, our sorrow, our agony, if through our indifference, our inconsistencies, our failures in duty, it should be said to those who come in reach of our influence, 'depart,' and what shall be our hope of hearing the words of 'well done?' God say to us, the voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground. Oh let us be careful. Let us be prayerful and strive to help each other to overcome our faults, and to win sinners from their wanderings into safety and security of Christ's sheltering love and care.

Love and Kindness.

Love originates with God, for God is love. Mother, do we always realize what kind and loving words will do for those precious little treasures God has entrusted to our care, to lead and cultivate the talents he has given them?

In springtime, how very careful are we in preparing the ground in our gardens. We enrich the soil and how careful we are in selecting the seed to sow, and with what anxiety we look for the first germ, and watch their growth day by day, and how careful we are in guarding them from the frost. Yet sometimes in an hour of neglect the biting frost sweep away all our treasures we labored so much to obtain.

So with the little tender heart we have to cultivate, not only for usefulness in life, but for life eternal. How careful we should see what seed we sow. The little minds are very active, their little hearts will be filled with something. Seed planted there will mature sooner or later. Words of kindness and encouragement are as sunshine on our plants, harsh words as the chilly winds and the biting frost.

Mothers, we who have sit at the bedside and held the icy hand for the last time; we who have looked on the silent face, we who have seen the little one lowered to its last resting place, we only know with what force those harsh words spoken in an unguarded moment come back to us. Or it sparrowed out in the battle of life, how often we look back and wish we had them again at our knee, that we might exchange harsh words for words of love and kindness.

Harsh words harden the heart in which God has placed affections to cultivate. We can even gain the affection of domestic animals. How much more the little child in which is placed a spirit that came from God. If we once gain the confidence of a child, it is an easy matter to control it. But without that it is a task both for parent and child. Do we always consider what a kind word, a loving caress, a good-night kiss will do for the wayward little one? We should make a great deal of allowance for children. They have many trials, great trials to them; they have our sympathy at all times.

Their little hearts are so tender that every harsh word leaves a scar, although partially healed the callous is there and in time harsh words even storms of passion take no effect. Then why not love them while we have them young and tender with the love and affection God has given them, and try and help them so that when they grow older their affections will grow, and when out in life a mother's love, a mother's prayers will follow them. And although they are wayward at times, yet when they are old they will not depart from the things taught them.

Then love and kindness are as bread cast upon the water.

R. ALLISBAUGH.

Fire was Kindled by the Aid of Ice.

The Washington Star says that a group of smokers were chatting in the garden of one of the principal hotels when a gentleman, who had taken a fresh cigar, asked his companions for a match. None of them had the article, but one of them suggested that a lump of ice might be used to light the cigar. There was a general laugh at the suggestion, but the man was in earnest. After being jeered at, and made the butt of witticisms for some time, he quietly proceeded to prove his suggestion feasible. Taking a piece of clear ice about an inch thick from the water-cooler, he whittled the edges, and then held it between the palms of his hands until it took the shape of a convex disc or burning-glass. Holding it where it caught the sun's rays, he focussed them on the end of a cigar, and triumphantly held it out fully lighted for the inspection of the company. Many a cold blighting affliction, from which nothing but sorrow seemed likely to come, has similarly been the medium of new fire to the Christian's faith and love by transmitting into his heart the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. (Heb. 12: 11.)

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